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ABSTRACT

Problems with the definition of "developing institutions" in Title III of the Higher Education Act are discussed. After a historical perspective of the concept and the ways in which the term has been applied, the paper offers some possible definitive factors. Consideration is also given to stages of development in general and to characteristics of students and student choices in connection with identification of developing institutions. It is concluded that "developing institutions" must be more closely defined for Title III funds to be appropriately allocated. (LBH)

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"DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONS:" THE NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE DEFINITIVE CRITERIA

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For

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I. In Historical Perspective

It has become increasingly difficult to clearly define a developing institution, yet the need to do so has never been more urgent. The Title III program was established to help strengthen "developing institutions," and it is important that a proper definition be arrived at or at least some definite criteria be established for identifiying these institutions.

Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 is intended "to assist in raising the academic quality of colleges which have the desire and potential to make a substantial contribution to the higher education resources of our nation but which for financial and other reasons are struggling for survival and are isolated from the main currents of academic life." Perhaps it is the "other reasons" that make it not very easy to set criteria for "developing institutions."

The definition of the term "developing institution" as used in the Act involves criteria that are far too broad and general. Two of the criteria used in the Title III to define the term "developing institution" demonstrate this:

(1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a secondary school, or the recognized equivalent of such certificate.

(2) is making reasonable effort to improve the quality of its teaching and administrative staffs and of its student services.

Nearly all institutions can claim that they admit students on the basis of secondary school graduation, and make reasonable efforts

to improve the quality of their faculty and administrative staffs and student services. In 1972, Alexander Astin and Calvin Lee noted that "the percentages of students of invisible colleges and elite colleges who attended public high school are roughly the same." [1] Their list of invisible colleges consisted of Roman Catholic Colleges, Protestant colleges, nonsectarian colleges, black colleges, teachers' colleges, and a few technological schools.

In 1963 the term developing college was synonymous with Negro college, a view which was championed by Jerrold R. Zacharias, Chairman of the Education Panel of President Kennedy's Science Advisory Group. Lawrence C. Howard in 1967 noted the problems confronting Negro higher education: "segregation, the cycle of the underprepared student trained by a poorly prepared profession which results in inadequately trained teachers, a staggering college dropout rate, and instruction at the high school level." [2] This laid the basis for the deprivation view which prevailed over the culturally different view which was espoused by some social scientists at the time. The economic perspective of development is also inherent in the deprivation viewpoint.

[1]Alexander Astin and Calvin Lee, the Invisible Colleges (New York: McGraw Hill Book Campany, 1972), p. 54.

[2]Lawrence C. Howard, The Developing College Program: Study of Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Institute of Human Relations: University of Wisconsin, 1967), p. 22.

The economic view of development in higher education embraced, for a while, the idea that developing colleges should be assisted in order that they might achieve the traditional 5% economic growth. But this view tended to emphasize the weakness of the college rather than its strength. In fact it needs to be noted that the developing colleges often feared that this emphasis on their weakness might eventually result in their being merged or weeded out. This fear had the effect of bringing about a change in emphasis from the weakness to the strength and potential of developing colleges. The strength and potential aspect of developing institutions was enhanced by the emphasis on self-help, as well as by the attitude that developing institutions should be developed less to be like the more established institutions and more like themselves. All this only makes it more difficult to establish criteria for a developing institution, for there is hardly any uniform standard by which to measure a developed institution. The situation becomes further complicated by the culturally different viewpoint of the developing institutions.

Coupled with the culturally different view is the impact of the idea of liberation. Perhaps, too, this has not contributed to the success of the cooperative idea whereby small weak colleges are linked in consortium with stronger colleges. So called developing colleges have felt the need to develop on their own at times with the idea that they have made a contribution on their own, separate and apart from the so-called stronger, more developed institutions. In other words the view tends to prevail that they are needed by the nation as much as they stand in need of help.

Just prior to the Higher Education Act of 1965, Dr. Broadus N. Butler, then Special Assistant to U.S. Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel, stressed very strongly that the Negro's pivotal role in America's history should not be the least factor in any consideration of Federal support for education. The whole question of the importance of extending America's manpower resources had become paramount, and the predominantly Negro college was considered as a resource that should be preserved and strengthened. In other words the need to strengthen "developing institutions" was great. With time the main problem would be to be able to define, identify or determine what colleges should be designated as "developing institutions."

II. Some Possible Definitive Factors

The early years of Title III saw efforts made to identify "developing institutions" by a consideration of the levels of activity undertaken by institutions. Quantitative measures were rigidly applied: student enrollment, faculty with doctoral degrees, number of minority students, library volumes, etc. However, it is generally held that such quantitative measures indicating certain levels of activity have proved inadequate in defining "developing institutions." To this end the Weathersby study on developing institutions notes:

> We see no reason to believe that "developed" institutions spend more money per student, have more library volumes, have a higher proportion of low income or ethnic minority students, admit a higher proportion of clever students, have a larger development office, undertake more curricula reform, or indeed differ on any other traditional activity measures.[3]

[3]George B. Weathersby, et al, the Development of Institutions of Higher Education: Theory and Assessment of Impact of Four possible Areas of Federal Intervention (U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C.), p. 45.

One of the factors worth noting in any consideration of a definition of "developing institutions" is institutional vitality. J. B. Lon Hefferlin in Dynamics of Academic Reform has elaborated on the concept of institutional vitality. While institutional goals are basicly conservative, it is necessary that colleges and universitites have mechanisms that help them cope with change. Hefferlin further enumerated certain conditions that he found useful in indicating whether or not an institution is dynamic:

1. There existed a market for ideas on campus
2. There existed new models needed for emulation
3. New ideas did circulate widely
4. There were marginal (and non-conformist) individuals on campus who were likely to act as "advocates".
5. There were enough new individuals on campus to make major changes possible
6. The institution was able to retain the "right" people.
7. Initiative was decentralized
8. A patriarchal system of decision-making had be avoided.
9. A collegial census system of decision-making has been avoided.
10. The college had instituted an "avuncular" system of decision-making.[4]

[4]J. B. Lon Hefferlin, Dynamics of Academic Reform (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969), p

In commenting on these conditions, Harold Hodgkinson observed that "few of Hefferlin's ten conditions characterizing dynamic institutions will be found in the campuses of "developing institution." [5] Hodgkinson stated:

> Based on our case studies, we are convinced that "developing institutions" have a different and more patriarchal style of presidential leadership than the more "developed" institutions, which have more elaborate internal structures (and better developed checks and balances).[6]

Commenting still further, Hodgkinson noted that "very sizeable minorities of "developing institutions" (like their presidents) are quite complacent and do not attach much importance to self-study and planning."[7]

In the language of Title III, one of the characteristics of a "developing institition" is that it "is, for financial or other reasons, struggling for survival and is isolated from the main currents of academic life." Lawrence Howard in his study of developing colleges and universities discussed the survival idea in the context of the relationship between the colleges and their external environments:

> Developing colleges are struggling for survival precisely because their relationships to their environments are unfavorable. The struggle may be rooted in inadequate

[5]Harold L. Hodgkinson, A Study of Title III of the Higher Education Act: The Developing Institutions Program (Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley, 1974), p. 99

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 105

> resources or it may be traceable to the position the college has in its supersystems, such as a state master plan or a church-related system of education.

The latter alternative indicates that "developing institutions" be considered struggling for survival when their independence becomes threatened by legislative intrusions.

III. Stages of Development in General

In 1960 W. W. Rostow in the Stages of Economic Development discussed the stages of growth in national economics: Traditional Society, Preconditions For Take-Off, and Drive to Maturity. Hodgkinson and Schenkel in their case studies divided the institutions into three groups that corresponded with Rostow's three stages of development: Low range, medium range and high range institutions. The measures used to determine the stages were: leadership dynamism and efficiency; cost-effectiveness; sense of role and long-range direction; student demand for involvement; faculty-administrative relations; community-relations. Institutions in the low range are the most hampered by the basic problems in their daily operations related to these measures.

Hodgkinson and Schenkel made suggestions with regard to their model in the determination of funding "developing institutions":

> Institutions in the "low range" of institutional development cannot be considered on cost-effectiveness terms, as they are usually casting about for a sense of institutional mission.... Given the Kinds of institutional needs we have described for institutions at the low viability level, larger amounts of Title III funds should be directed toward the needs of these institutions.[8]

[7]Lawrence Howard, p. 115

[8]Harold L. Hodgkinson and Walter Schenkel, A Study of Title III of the Higher Education Act: The Developing Institutions Program, 1974, pp. 220-221.

Stages or phases of institutional development may also be based on a consideration of the prevailing types of managerial crises: leadership, control, autonomy or red-tape. Such situations, are, to a greater or lesser extent,intertwined with structural development as it is impacted upon by technological advance. Typical of the less developed institution is the crisis of leadership. The Weathersby study has noted that "these inherent 'managerical crises' provide both a threat to organizational survival and an opportunity for organizational growth." [9]

George B. Weathersby and others in their study of the development of institutions of higher education have specified four areas which could constitute the basis for determining stages of institutional development. These four areas are: (1) the structural development of colleges and universitites; (2) the levels of activities within colleges (students, faculty, courses, degrees, etc.); (3) the relative efficiency of resource use; and (4) student choice, including the impacts of college characteristics. Of these a consideration of structural development and the relative efficiency of resource use is important to the discussion on aspects relevant to the search for a definition of "developing institutions." [10]

Hitherto, determination of eligibility to receive Title III funds has been based on activity rather than structural development. Such an approach has left a void with regard to what is a developing

[9]George Weathersby, the Development of Institutions of Higher Education: Theory and Impact of Four Possible Areas of Federal Intervention. (Office of Education), p. 15.

[10]Ibid., p. 4.

institution. It is not suggested here that the structural development approach can fill this void. However, a study of the decision-making patterns of colleges and universitities according to Larry E Greiner, provides an opportunity to assess the developmental stages that may be implied in such patterns. Greiner has warned that "the task of top management is to be aware of these stages, otherwise it may not recognize when the time for change has come or it may act to impose the wrong solution." [11] The Weathersby study suggests the possiblity of deducing what is a developing institution " in that institutions that explicity examine their relations with external communities and organizations are more advanced," and "institutions that involve faculty and students as well as administrators in policy formulation and implementation decisions are more advanced."[12]

The efficiency factor may also be cautiously considered as an indicator of the developmental stage of an institution. Efficient institutions spend about 80% less per student than the less efficient institutions. It is true that this index gruarantees of no clear distinction between developing and developed institutions. It is also true, however, that many of the institutions which lie outside of the efficient set might be considered developing institutions which need to reorganize their use of resources in order to increase their output with existing resources. It is important that efficiency be encouraged in an effort to save or devote to other purposes funds derived from a reduction of per student cost in the less developed institutions.

[11]Larry E. Greiner, "Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow" Harvard Business Review, 1975, 50, p. 44

[12]Weathersby, p. 19

The factor of independence may also be a useful guide to identifying "developing institutions." Lewis B. Maryhew in commenting on these institutions considers them "small autonomous institutions responsible for their own evolution." Leland Medsker and Dale Tillery in 1971 expressed concern for the furture of independent two-year colleges:

> These will be, and of course should be, the ones which, because of small size and inherent weaknesses, simply cannot maintain a program worthy of support.... It is probable that if new means of financing the institutions are to be found, only the best ones will be able to compete for the support...But in the process of planning for the furture, the independent colleges themselves will have to exert influence and leadership.[13]

The stage of development of an institution might also be determined by the level of technological development. According to Edward St. John and George Weathersby "technological development used in its broadest sense refers to the relative degree of sophistication and efficiency of the means of conducting institutional activities and includes both traditional and nontraditional teaching, student service, and management activities. "Technological characteristics are of two kinds, hardware and software. Software includes development in instructional programs - basic skills programs, individualized instruction programs, work experience programs and assessment of prior experience. Hardware, on the other hand, refers to the use of equipment (i.e. television, video, computers) in the instructional delivery process.

[13]Edward St. John and George B. Weathersby, Institutional Development in Higher Education, p. 41.

Can colleges that are faced with administrative problems be termed developing institutions? At such institutions the president is so pre-occupied with management matters that he is unable to keep abreast of educational thinking. Adequate provision is not made for modest personnel and equipment for effective administration. Inability to rent or purchase necessary equipment for treatment of data places unnecessary drain on already inadequate staff. Lack of continuity in administration effected by frequent turnovers also affects the progress of the college. The possibility is that different kinds of presidents are found at different periods in the institution's history. "Accounding to Lewis B. Mayhew," each of these shifts in orientation results in considerable loss of educational momentum on the part of the faculty and the entire organization."[14] It would seem that the autocratic conditions of public-school administration which became the pattern of community-college administration is characteristic of developing institutions, as distinct from the more democratic administration of the more advanced institutions.

V. Students and Student Choices

A consideration of students and student choices is not the least important in the search for more effective definitive criteria for identifying "developing institutions." Most of the Federal spending under the Higher Education Act goes to direct student aid under the Basic and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, College Work-Study and Student Loan Programs. The institutions attended

[14]Lewis B. Maylew, The Smaller Liberal Arts College (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1962), pp. 80-81.

by the majority of students who receive these grants are not the highly developed ones. They are usually the institutions that are less developed and struggling for survival. The students who seek Federal aid tend to apply to such institutions that are likely to admit them rather than to the more advanced institutions where standards are much higher. An interesting piece of research would be a study of the correlation between institutions funded by Title III and those funded by federal sudent-aid programs, with a focus on students. Size and selectivity become important factors when considering such institutions.

In 1972, Alexander W. Astin and Calvin B. T. Lee, in a study of Invisible Colleges, discussed the importance of size and selectivity in determining invisible colleges or developing institutions. A decade before, a study by Astin revealed that most of the differences among institutions on 33 measures of institutional attributes could be accounted for by two general factors: size and affluence. The average academic ability of it entering students was considered the best single measure of an institution's affluence. It was generally assumed that high selectivity is a good enough condition for high visibility. Coming from a lower socio-economic group, students at the less visible colleges find it impractical to consider careers that would demand high financial expenditures.

A comparison of student bodies from different institutions might reveal information that might distinguish between established and developing institutions . Astin and Lee in their study of invisible colleges noted certain student body characteristics which may be

attributed to so-called developing institutions and certain others to so-called established institutions. In doing so the investigators concentrated on demographic characteristics, economic characteristics, high school back ground, educational aspirations, political preferences, and career choice. While at present no conclusion can be arrived at regarding their place in the search for a definition of "developing institutions," a consideration of their importance in determining various types of colleges is useful.

Astin and Lee discovered that "invisible colleges tend to enroll somewhat smaller proportions of young students than do elite colleges."[15] Non-whites are enrolled at invisible colleges in greater numbers than at the elite colleges. Amoung the invisible colleges the most throughly segregated are the predominantly black colleges. More students at elite colleges report that their fathers had earned postgraduate degrees. Astin and Lee stated that judging by mean percentages, invisible colleges enroll close to four time as many students from families with poverty-level incomes as elite colleges do."[16] Students in the invisible colleges tend to choose the service professions where the demand is relatively high: elementary and secondary teaching, the non M.D. health professions, and nursing.

[15]Astin and Lee, p. 49

[16]Ibid., p. 53

In view of the unfavorable conditions and the many problems that face the less developed institutions, Earl McGrath has concluded that "a larger proportion of these institutions need strengthening than of the whole family of colleges and universities."[17] Lewis Mayhew has also observed that the less developed institution "has a place in the American scene, but it has a place only when it is strong enough to provide an adequate program."[18]

It is going to be all the more imperative that "developing institutions" be more closely defined in order that Title III funds be appropriately allocated. This need is increasingly apparent in view of the fact that it is not the intent of Title III to become an institutional grant program providing Federal general support to colleges and universities. Rather the intent of the legislation is to provide support for the development process until the institution reaches some level of insitutional health, that is. until the institution is "developed." While it is generally admitted that the development process will not terminate, the institutions will reach some level of development which will reduce the investment in development.

[17]Earl J. McGrath, The Predominantly Negro Colleges and Universities (Teachers College, Columbia University: Bureau of Publications, 1975), P. vii.

[18]Lewis Mayhew, opicit., P. 104